

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2480
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION SINAI
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 18733

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT EG
SUBJECT: SADAT'S NEW PARTY

REF: CAIRO 18448

SUMMARY: SADAT WILL ADDRESS NATION AUGUST 14, NAMING
COMMITTEE TO DIRECT NEW PARTY'S AFFAIRS, AND WILL TOUR
ALL GOVERNORATES AFTER RAMADAN ON PARTY'S BEHALF.
OPPOSITION LEADER MURAD PREDICTS PARTY WILL FAIL AS PO-
LITICAL ORGANIZATION,BUT CENTRIST POLITICAL LEADERS
SEE NEW PARTY AS A FURTHER STEP TOWARD POLITICAL LIBERAL-
IZATION.

PARTY'S SUCCESS WILL DEPEND ON THOROUGH ORGANIZATION, THE
AREA IN WHICH SALEM SO CLEARLY FAILED. PRESIDENT'S
DIRECT ENTRY INTO THE MORASS OF DOMESTIC POLITICS COULD
PROVE TROUBLESOME TO HIM IF GENERAL UNEASE CONTINUES,
PARTICULARLY SINCE SALEM'S PARTY LEADERSHIP SERVED AS AN
EFFECTIVE BUFFER. AT SAME TIME, SADAT'S PERSONAL
ENGAGEMENT--IF PARTY IS SUCCESSFUL--COULD
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ENHANCE ALREADY HIGH MASS POPULARITY,GIVING HIM EVEN
GREATER LATITUDE IN DECISIONS RELATING TO THE PEACE
PROCESS. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENTIAL INVOLVEMENT. PRESIDENT SADAT IS SCHEDULED
TO ADDRESS EGYPTIAN PUBLIC AUGUST 14 ON HIS NEW NATIONAL
DEMOCRATIC PARTY (NDP), NAMING MEMBERS OF CONSTITUENT

COMMITTEE WHO WILL DIRECT PARTY AFFAIRS. HEAD OF PARTY'S ORGANIZING COMMITTEE, FIKRI MAKRAM EBEID, HAS TOLD PRESS THAT CONSTITUENT COMMITTEE WILL BE MADE UP OF EGYPTIAN UNIVERSITY RECTORS, PROFESSORS, STUDENTS AND LABOR LEADERS, AS WELL AS REPRESENTATIVES OF PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. HE INDICATED THAT ONLY 35 MEMBERS OF PEOPLES ASSEMBLY WILL BE CHOSEN FOR THIS 140 MAN BODY, AND THAT NONE WILL BE IN CABINET. FOLLOWING RAMADAN, IN MID SEPTEMBER, SADAT HAS SAID HE WILL TOUR ALL (25) GOVERNORATES TO DISCUSS NDP AND ITS FUTURE ACTIONS.

2. SELF-FINANCING. FIKRI MAKRAM EBEID INSISTED NEW PARTY WILL BE SELF-FINANCING, AND WILL NEITHER SEEK NOR ACCEPT GOVERNMENT SUPPORT. (COMMENT: WAFD, IN ITS BRIEF REINCARNATION, PURSUED SAME LINE AND MET WITH CONSIDERABLE POPULR FINANCIAL SUPPORT. OTHER PARTIES HAVE ENJOYED LITTLE SUCCESS IN FUND RAISING.) IN RESPONSE TO ANNOUNCEMENT, LAND TRANSPORT UNION AND VARIETY OF PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS IMMEDIATELY DONATED 15,000 POUNDS--PERHAPS ONE OR TWO PERCENT OF NEW PARTY'S NEEDS. EBEID SUGGESTED PARTY WILL SEEK BANK LOAN (AMOUNT UNDISCLOSED) TO COVER REMAINDER, ALLOWING NDP TO ESTABLISH HEADQUARTERS AND PROVINCIAL CENTERS.

3. LEADER OF SMALL RIGHT WING "NATIONAL SOCIALIST"
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PARTY MUSTAFA KAMEL MURAD PREDICTED TO US AUGUST 10 THAT NDP WILL FAIL AS POLITICAL ORGANIZATION. MURAD NOTED THE DIFFICULTY ALL ONE PARTY STATES HAVE ENN COUNTERED IN TRYING TO ESTABLISH MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY, AND CLAIMED IT IS "IMPOSSIBLE" TO IMPOSE A GENUINE PARTY FROM ABOVE. HE SAID THAT MANY, INCLUDING AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF PARLIAMENTARIANS, MAY JOIN NDP, BUT THEY WILL DO SO ONLY TO PROTECT THEIR INDIVIDUAL INTERESTS. THE GENERAL ELECTORATE WILL, IN HIS VIEW, PROVE APATHETIC OR RESENTFUL OVER DE FACTO RETURN TO ONE-MAN RULE. IN THE END, MURAD HYPOTHESIZED, NEW PARTY WILL BE UNLIKELY TO SURVIVE ITS FOUNDER. HE CONCLUDED THAT SADAT "IS IN A CORNER": HIS ECONOMIC POLICY IS IN A SHAMBLES, THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SYSTEM REMAINS UNFORMED, AND THE PEACE INITIATIVE "WILL NOT SUCCEED." (MURAD'S FRANK AND FORTHRIGHT CRITICISM ITSELF TESTIFIES TO THE FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES TOWARDS POLITICAL OPENNESS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN EGYPT. THIS IS A TREND THAT WE DOUBT THE NEW PARTY WILL REVERSE, HOWEVER DIFFERENT FROM WESTERN POLITICAL PARTIES IT TURNS OUT TO BE.)

4. ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE OF NEW PARTY'S FUTURE WAS GIVEN TO EGY DIRECTOR MARTHINSEN AND POLCOUNS AUGUST 10 BY DEPUTY SPEAKER OF THE PEOPLES ASSEMBLY, DR. GAMAL OTEIFI. OTEIFI THOUGHT SADAT'S PARTY WAS LIKELY TO REINFORCE THE TREND TOWARD REAL MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY, THOUGH THIS WAS ADMITTEDLY SOME YEARS OFF. HE CONCEDED THERE WAS A DILEMMA IN TRYING TO INFUSE "OPPOSITION" PARTIES WITH ENTHUSIASM WHEN THE MAJORITY PARTY WAS SANCTIFIED BY THE PRESIDENT'S BLESSING. HOWEVER, HE THOUGHT THIS MIGHT IN PART BE TAKEN CARE OF BY FACT THAT, ACCORDING TO HIS UNDERSTANDING, NATIONAL DEMO-

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CRATIC PARTY PARLIAMENTARY FACTION WAS LIKELY TO BE SMALLER (AND MORE SELECTIVE) THAN MISR PARTY. THUS THE ASSEMBLY MEMBERS NOT ADMITTED TO THE NDP, AS WELL AS MANY PRESENT INDEPENDENTS, WOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO FORM THEIR OWN PARTIES. BEYOND THAT, THERE WOULD INEVITABLY BE GROUPS THAT OPPOSED EACH OTHER ON VARIOUS DOMESTIC ISSUES WITHIN THE NDP, AS THERE ARE IN MISR. IN SHORT, OTEIFI BELIEVED SADAT WAS STILL GROPING, BUT THAT THE END RESULT WOULD BE GREATER RATHER THAN LESS POLITICAL FREEDOM.

5. COMMENT: KEY TO PARTY'S SUCCESS WILL BE ITS ABILITY ESTABLISH OPERATING STRUCTURE REACHING GRASS ROOTS LEVEL. IT WAS IN THIS AREA THAT SALEM'S CENTER PARTY FAILED SO DISMALLY. SADAT'S TRIPS TO COUNTRYSIDE WILL CERTAINLY GIVE PARTY A PSYCHOLOGICAL BOOST. NEVERTHELESS,

PRESIDENT IS UNLIKELY TO BE ABLE, OR WILLING, TO DEVOTE THE TIME NECESSARY TO INSURE ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS, AND CHOICE OF SECOND ECHELON LEADERS WILL BE CRITICAL.

6. PHILOSOPHY OF NEW PARTY, AS ARTICULATED BY EBEID
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(REFTEL), AS WELL AS ABSORPTION OF MISR PARTY INTO NDP, APPEARS TO INDICATE THAT NEW POLITICAL ORGANIZATION WILL REPRESENT AS DISPARATE INTERESTS AS SALEM'S GROUP, AND MAY PROVE TO BE UNIFIED ONLY BY LOYALTY TO PRESIDENT. DIFFERENCES OVER NUTS AND BOLTS ISSUES ARE BOUND TO CONTINUE.

7. NDP'S FORMATION, IN SHORT RUN, SHOULD HAVE LITTLE EFFECT ON SADAT'S ABILITY TO PURSUE PEACE INITIATIVE. HOWEVER, REMOVAL OF BUFFER WHICH SALEM REPRESENTED, AS LEADER OF MAJORITY PARTY COULD MAKE SADAT MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO CRITICISM ON GOVERNMENT'S DOMESTIC SHORTCOMINGS. TO EXTENT THIS TARNISHES PRESIDENT'S IMAGE, IT COULD AFFECT PEACE PROCESS. ON THE OTHER HAND, SADAT'S ALREADY BROAD POPULARITY AMONG THE EGYPTIAN MASSES IS LIKELY TO BE STRENGTHENED BY HIS PERSONAL ENGAGEMENT IN PARTY AFFAIRS--AND THIS WOULD, OF COURSE, INCREASE HIS LATITUDE TO MAKE DIFFICULT FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS. WHAT EFFECT SADAT'S ENTRY INTO PARTY AFFAIRS WILL HAVE ON EVEN MORE CRITICAL GROUPS, SUCH AS THE MILITARY, IS VERY UNCLEAR AND IS LIKELY TO REMAIN SO FOR SOME TIME.
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